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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KABUL 003822

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SUBJECT: PRT/KHOWST - FEAR AND LOATHING IN KHOWST BORDER
REGION

Classified By: A/Political-Military Counselor Marie Richards for reason
s 1.4 b, d.

11. (C) Summary: Tensions are mounting between the
Khowst Afghan Border Police (ABP) Commander General
Muhammad Khalil Amin Zada and his Deputy, Colonel
Almar Gul Mangal. Khalil, generally thought to be
effective and relatively honest, met with PRTOff,
PRT Commander, and DynCorp officials in late July.
Khalil complained that Mangal was undermining his
authority, was using his position to smuggle
contraband, and was overly permissive of Anti-
Coalition Militia (ACM) activity. Khalil said his
efforts to break up Mangal,s illicit operations had
made him an assassination target. End Summary.

ABP Khost Soap Opera

12. (C) On July 5, Khalil told PRTOff that Deputy
Commander Mangal was "on his best behavior" because
he feared getting sacked by MOI following the
conclusion of an internal investigation into
allegations against him. Khalil said at the July
meeting that both Mangal and MOI leadership had
"tricked" him; Mangal, he said, was ratcheting up
corruption and smuggling behind Khalil,s back, and
MOI had no intention of firing Mangal, much less
conducting further investigations on him.

13. (C) Khalil asserted that Colonel Sher Aman Kuchi
was fired for bringing Mangal,s corruption to light
at MOI Headquarters and for requesting MOI to
transfer Mangal. He claimed it was illegal to
reappoint fired officers to the same province and

that Mangal only saved himself by paying off MOI leadership. Kuchi, however, told PRTOff August 1 that although this was a contributing factor, the main reason he was reassigned was because Khalil had requested it. Kuchi maintained that Mangal convinced Khalil he would not be able to be effective without Mangal,s help and influence as his deputy. He also claimed Mangal convinced Khalil that Kuchi,s high reputation and effectiveness might "outshine" Khalil. Kuchi said he did not hold the decision against Khalil, who "is doing good work to shut down smuggling."

Trying to Kill the Boss

¶4. (C) Despite bravado that he,s not afraid of Mangal, Khalil only reluctantly told PRTOff about a vehicle-born improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack on his convoy in early July. Although foiled, the attacker confessed that Khalil was his target and Khalil suspects Mangal is behind the operation. Kuchi said Mangal threatened to kill Khalil just before the change in command in early June if he did not pick him as his deputy. Kuchi also claimed ABP National Commander General Mohammad Harron Asifi told him Mangal would try to kill him if he stayed in Khost.

Alleged ACM Links: "Your Enemies are Mangal,s Friends"

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¶5. (C) Khalil and Kuchi accused Mangal of collusion with ACM forces, or, at a minimum, a willingness to do business with them. Kuchi presented an April 4, 2005, letter from Mangal to border checkpoint officers, requesting they allow free passage of a Pakistan-bound truck with 14 rocket propelled grenade (RPG) rounds. Khalil said MOI found out about the incident, but only required Mangal to publicly apologize and promise not to repeat the behavior. Khalil also suspects Mangal of collusion in the July 16 attack on Border Check Point 5, but offered no details. "Your friends are Mangal,s enemies and his friends are your enemies," said Khalil.

Preaching Mutiny and Questioning Loyalties

¶6. (C) In an attempt to make Khalil look inept, Mangal recently undertook a reverse recruitment effort to get ABP forces to quit en masse, according to Khalil. Mangal allegedly convinced 50 patrolmen to desert, encouraged by enticements from Mangal of better wages with other Afghan security forces. Khalil said all 50 took their new USG-purchased Smith and Wesson pistols with them and he was actively engaged in recovering the weapons. However, DynCorp confirmed August 3 that the actual number of patrolmen was closer to 30 and all but 14 have returned to duty.

¶7. (C) Khalil said he could not trust about half of his force. He claimed 101 of his 220-member force are Mangal tribesman. (Note: DynCorp officials in Khost track total ABP troop strength at just over 800; they believe Khalil is referring to ABP Headquarters staff. End Note.) He said Mangal created a "Mangal Mafia" by packing the ABP with "his thugs" during his tenure as commander. Kuchi claimed Khalil was overstating the problem, estimating that only about 35 officers were Mangals

and only 13 of those are solidly in Mangal,s camp and three complicit in ACM activity. He claimed everyone else hates Mangal.

"Mangal Mafia" Mastermind,s Misdeeds

18. (C) Khalil said he could stop corruption and smuggling with additional funding and equipment, but warned that without such support he could not compete with Mangal,s lucrative smuggling operation. Khalil said Mangal has informants at each border checkpoint to facilitate a smuggling and bribery network. Both men would offer only anecdotal accounts of Mangal,s corruption until pressed for details. For instance, Khalil claimed Mangal could not support his two wives, extravagant lifestyle, and shops full of sequestered goods in downtown Khost City on an ABP salary. "He,s like a pregnant woman; the evidence is in the belly."

19. (C) Eventually, both men described a trucking network that starts in Paktika and is guided around ABP checkpoints on back roads by Mangal,s nephew while he is on duty with the ABP. Border Checkpoint

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nine in northern Khost is particularly exploited, according to Khalil. Khalil claimed he is constantly moving personnel between checkpoints and investigating officials to break up the network, which "is making Mangal crazy." Although Khalil said he has made significant progress, as soon as he leaves the province on official business, Mangal cranks up the illegal trafficking.

110. (C) Khalil and/or Kuchi also claimed Mangal:

--skimmed "transfer charges" from officer,s pay. Khalil said he put an end to the practice, but it resumed when he was in Kabul during wage distribution for the June 25 pay period. Under the scam, Mangal,s people in headquarters collect a 30 Afghani cut (more than \$600 total per pay period for 800-plus member force). Kuchi exposed this to MOI and brought the results of the MOI investigation, a factor in Mangal,s original dismissal.

--collected 160,000 Afghanis (more than \$3,000) pay from absent ABP officers. Khalil claimed he put an end to the practice and absentee wages now go into an ABP bank account.

--illegally took rent from people who lived in homes on ABP land in Khost City. Khalil claimed rent now goes into an ABP bank account.

--pilfered ABP supplies for profit. Kuchi said out of 1,800 boots, Mangal distributed only 400.

--manufactured 2,000 fake signatures from elders of Khost in a bid to convince MOI to keep him in Khost. Kuchi said MOI knows they are fake.

--spent about 7,500,000 Kaldars (\$125,000) in bribes to MOI senior officials to keep his job (Kuchi source).

--paid a group of ABP officers to "spontaneously" complain about Kuchi, a day before Kuchi and Mangal were to meet ABP National Commander General Mohammad Harron Asifi to air their differences. One of the officers confessed, according to Kuchi. The next day Mangal tried to imply Kuchi ties to Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) based on an official trip to Pakistan Kuchi took to discuss border security.

--is paid off for facilitating trans-border trafficking of about 25,000 kilos of hashish each month. Kuchi claimed that in one incident, Mangal accepted 700,000 Kaldars (\$12,000) and a new land cruiser to free a jailed drug dealer in 2005. Kuchi said documents evidencing this and other illicit Mangal acts were stolen from his vehicle in Kabul. Kuchi also claimed a group of Mangal,s private bodyguards were jailed in Gardez for drug trafficking.

Comments

¶11. PRT Comment: (C) Although we cannot believe everything Khalil says and he is obviously trying to leverage us to get rid of his Mangal problem,

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DynCorp has high regard for Khalil and believes he is a generally reliable source. Despite bravado to the contrary, Khalil is afraid to provide specifics that might result in retribution and has limited his appeal to getting Mangal transferred out of the province. PRT Commander and PRTOff contend that, if the charges are true, Mangal should be barred from any command, if not arrested. In any event, Mangal,s continued presence is sabotaging Khalil,s efforts to enforce border control and reduce corruption. The return of Kuchi as deputy would be a welcome change. End PRT Comment.

¶12. (C) Observations and Comment from Commander of Task Force Vigilant, Coalition Forces, (CFC-A) Military Police unit working along the border in Khost with ABP: General Mangal was a self appointed commander of the 2nd Afghan Border Police. He held that position for 4 years, until he was replaced by Gen Khalil. He was moved down to the Deputy/XO position of the same unit, a huge blunder. Mangal has allegations of theft, extortion, threats, illegal checkpoints, and allowing drug trafficking, as long as he gets his share of money. In other incidents, Mangal punishes border officials for stopping illegal shipments coming in and out of Afghanistan. In addition to punishing the border patrol, he replaces those officials with members of his own family or other cronies loyal to him. His command has provided security for insurgents, smuggling, and trafficking in the vicinity of the infiltration routes coming across the border.

Mangal, while in the presence of coalition members, pretends to be cooperative, but goes back to his illegal activities as soon as the coalition leaves.

General Mangal is undermining the authority of the ABP Commander and should be completely removed or arrested. End CFC-A Observations and Comment.

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